



International Spanish Academy



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THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S TIS NEWS * FALL 2011

Board embarks on projects for TIS' future

Campus Master Plan underway

The 2010 TIS Strategic Plan set out the school's mission, core values and strategic goals for the future. Now the board has convened a Campus Master Plan committee to develop a physical campus plan that will support and enable the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan. The committee, comprised of trustees, teachers, administrators and parents, is working with experienced school architecture firm Mahlum to produce design options for feedback from the TIS community. In addition to many meetings with the Campus Master Plan Committee, the firm's managing partner and architect spent an entire day at TIS meeting with staff and parents and witnessing the school's flow firsthand. The board's objective is to have a final Campus Master Plan by January.

Head search attracts highly qualified field. New Head to start next summer.

After three wonderfully fruitful years as TIS Head of School, Dr. Alfonso Orsini will leave us next summer to take a well-deserved break. A board search committee composed of TIS trustees, teachers, administrators and parents has received nearly 60 applications for the Head of School position.

The four leading candidates will come to campus in October and November for a full slate of meetings with our teachers, staff, parents and trustees. The search committee aims to make a recommendation to the board by early December and announce the new Head by January. The new Head of School will start next summer.



Graduate Profile: Khali Lanning '02

Khali Lanning graduated from TIS in the Japanese Track in June 2002. She spent her high school junior year in Japan and has just left to attend three university terms in Europe. She plans a career in fashion.

When you think back to your time at TIS, what do you value most about it?

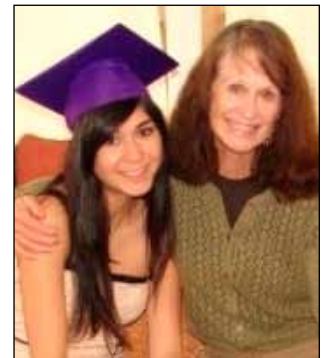
The most valuable lesson I took from my time at TIS was to be accepting and respectful towards cultures other than my own. My classes were always very diverse, as was the student body at TIS. There were many children with different cultures and

languages that I came into contact with every day, and that led me to become comfortable and open-minded in unfamiliar situations.

You spent your high school junior year in Japan. What made you want to do that?

To be honest, being a sophomore in high school I was very young and did not want to leave my friends to go spend a year in Japan by myself. But my mom really pushed me to do it and today I am so happy that she did, as it is something that has come to really define who I am and how I carry myself.

The experience forced me to become fiercely



Khali and her mom Tami

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independent, and gave me confidence in myself knowing that I could handle anything on my own. The most memorable aspect of that year was the people I met and the relationships that were formed. I lived with several different Japanese families who welcomed me into their homes, and also made lasting friendships with girls I met at school. Out of six exchange students, I was the only one that was fluent in the language. I was also the only exchange student who received credit for the classes I took while there.

Already being fluent in Japanese really gave me the ability to assimilate at the all-girls high school I attended. I made a conscious effort to make friends with the Japanese students – I ate lunch with them, joined the dance team, went shopping with them after school. I found that after I made an effort to get to know the students and teachers, I became part of the regular

student body (the exchange students were usually treated very differently than the Japanese students). And while I know the other foreign exchange students had a great experience, it was different than mine; having no prior knowledge of the language limited them.

“[TIS] gave me the ability to be comfortable in situations where I am the fish out of water.”

You're in college now, about to go

abroad again. Do you have any specific objectives for this time abroad?

At the end of September I leave for London for a term, and then I will go to Florence, Italy for two terms. I will be gone 8 months. Studying abroad in college was never a question of whether or not I would do it but rather a question of where I would go. My personal opinion is that every student should study abroad at least once before they graduate; the experience teaches you things that only studying abroad can. My only goal for the year is to be like a sponge and to fully immerse myself in the culture of wherever I am at that moment. I simply want to learn as much as possible, and to live the experience to its full extent.

Do you think that having attended TIS influences the way you think today?

Attending TIS definitely influences how I think today. Having the ability to speak Japanese will undoubtedly give me greater career options in the fashion industry, and will give me a leg up on the competition when applying for jobs. But what I'm most thankful for about my time at TIS is that the diversity of the school taught me to be accepting of people that are different than me. It gave me the ability to be comfortable in situations where I am the fish out of water, and to learn and be open-minded about the things I am unfamiliar with.



An IB Primer

In April 2010, TIS became one of 3000 schools in 138 countries authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB), a program offered by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO).

The Primary Years Programme (PYP) is the IBO program for ages 3 to 12, designed to foster the development of the whole child.

The IB-PYP uses six transdisciplinary themes as a framework for exploration and study:

- ▶ Who we are
- ▶ Where we are in place and time
- ▶ How we express ourselves
- ▶ How the world works
- ▶ How we organize ourselves
- ▶ Sharing the planet.

Within each theme, teachers create an age-appropriate *central idea* that concisely expresses an enduring understanding. It is substantial enough to generate in-depth inquiries, promote critical thinking, and extend students' prior knowledge. The central idea becomes the basis for a *unit of inquiry*.

For each unit of inquiry, students first assess “what we know” about the central idea. Next, students generate questions for “what we want to know.” The teacher then uses various engaging activities and assignments to guide students in answering their questions. At the end of each unit, students reflect on their learning and review “what we learned.”

Throughout the process, students and teachers strive to model the PYP Learner Profile:

*Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators,
Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers,
Balanced, Reflective*

For more information about the IB, please see www.intlschool.org/ib or www.ibo.org.

IB lessons connect kids to science



"It's about the connections," says Head of Early Childhood Maria Abad, speaking about how science is learned at TIS. "With the International Baccalaureate (IB) units of inquiry, science is connected to other traditional subjects such as social studies and math, but also to language, social-emotional development, citizenship and culture. Children get excited about science because they see how it connects to their lives."

Each class studies between four and six IB units of inquiry per year, and many units are either science-focused or have a science connection. For example, kindergarteners study the IB central idea, "Our senses connect us

to the world around us." To help make those connections, classes invite guest speakers and take field trips to places like Washington State School for the Blind or Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI).

With the help of one special OMSI class this fall, Chinese Teacher Emily Pan helped her students connect the science of the senses with their emotions and their individuality.

"When we hear a sound, each one of us may feel differently about it. I may find it too loud, and my friend may find it too soft," she says. "It can be difficult for five-year-olds to think about the sound, their ears, their feelings and a friend's feelings all at once. With practice they can get it." With this approach, what might otherwise be a standard lesson about the five senses can teach children how to be helpful to people with disabilities, how various cultures use flavors in their foods, how taste buds work, and how to describe something they can't see.

In fourth grade, students study the central idea, "The Earth constantly moves and changes through quick and slow processes." Classes visit Mt St. Helens, create representations of volcanoes, tsunamis and earthquakes,

and discuss how the earth's actions impact our lives. One student wanted to learn how much money and time it takes for a city to recover after an earthquake. Since the IB method encourages students to ask and find answers to their own questions, the student was able to do research that made the science meaningful to him.

Maria Abad reflects on the connection between science lessons and the language immersion concept. "Some people ask how we can teach all of these difficult, interconnected science topics in Chinese, Japanese or Spanish when the students are just starting to learn the language," she says.

"But that is the whole point of immersion; by learning lessons that are meaningful to them, children learn language naturally and absorb vocabulary, grammar, and contextual expressions. The language sticks with them because it is connected to their lives."

"Children get excited about science because they see how it connects to their lives."



Fifth graders dissected frogs as part of their IB unit, "All of life depends on reproductive processes." Students learned about the connections between the environment, adaptation, and animal and plant reproduction. Many thanks to the parent volunteer medical doctors who assisted with the lesson.



First graders study the central idea, "Body systems make the human body function." Teachers had their students examine animal organs obtained from a grocery store, discuss organ functions and compare them to diagrams of human bodies - all in Spanish, Japanese or Chinese.

Why PreK teachers wear mouse costumes

Teaching three-year-olds at The International School gives Chisa Sensei a unique perspective. "It's really rewarding to be a preschool teacher here," she explains. "I get to see the students start at the beginning and watch them grow over the next seven years. I get to see what they become."

Last year Chisa got to witness firsthand just how far some of her former students had come. The Japanese third graders visited Chisa's class to read their favorite childhood stories to the three-year-olds. One former student, Gigi, chose a book called *Guri to Gura*, a Japanese tale of two mice. Gigi remembered the story from when she had been in Chisa's class because Chisa used to read it while dressed in a handmade mouse costume. When Gigi visited the PreK class, Chisa lent her the mouse costume to wear. Chisa Sensei was so pleased to see the maturity of her former student as she read fluently and confidently in Japanese. "Lending Gigi the mouse costume was like handing down my wedding dress to my daughter," Chisa laughs. "I was so proud."

Chisa Terano began teaching 4 and 5 year olds at a preschool in Japan. She later moved to Portland to do her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction at Portland State University, where she focused on early childhood and bilingual education. Chisa learned of The International School through a research project on second language learning. She joined TIS as a teacher a few years later and has now been at the school for seven years. "I love The International School," she says. "I especially love the exposure to the different cultures, both for my students and for me."

Chisa loves to watch many of her students take their first steps into a new language. "I love when kids come here



without any knowledge of Japanese. They start to copy everything I say. At first, the words have no meaning to them, but it's great to watch as they start attaching those words and phrases to actual meaning. When they don't speak any Japanese at home, I know that everything they

realize their place in a larger world. "Culture is so much a part of life here, it's not an 'extra.' It's something special, but not something unusual." Academically, Chisa strives for independence in her students. "My favorite part of being a teacher is watching the things that we do together become their own. For example, if we work together on how to cut with scissors and I later see them using that skill by themselves, I feel really proud. And it's not only with physical skills, but also when I see them use the ideas we discuss in class. I want them to own their learning."

When asked what she hopes for her students at the end of each year, Chisa is quick to respond. "Confidence. I want the kids to be confident both academically and socially. It's rewarding for me to see a child who had a hard time joining the group at the beginning of the year, later become a strong part of the class."

"My favorite part of being a teacher is watching the things that we do together become their own."

say, they've learned from me. It's like a little piece of me that I've given them."

But it's not only the language component of a TIS education that excites Chisa; it's also helping her students



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